

Cherne Unit Not Tied to C.I.A. Fund

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By JOHN M. CREWDSON

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 20—

Frank Weil, president of the Manhattan-based Norman

Foundation, said today that he erred in his assertion yesterday

that the Central Intelligence Agency had passed about \$15-

000 through his organization to the International Rescue

Committee in the mid-1960's.

Mr. Weil said in a telephone interview that on checking the

foundation's records, he had discovered that none of the

\$27,000 it gave to the I.R.C. from 1961 to 1965 had been

provided by the intelligence agency.

He said that the \$50,000 in C.I.A. funds passed through the

foundation in that period had gone instead to four other orga-

nizations—the American Society of African Culture, the

African-American Institute, the Pan American Foundation and

the International Development Foundation.

Leo Cherne, one of President Ford's three appointees to a

new intelligence oversight board set up to check for pos-

sible abuses of authority by the C.I.A. and other intelligence

agencies, is board chairman of the I.R.C.

Mr. Cherne, a professional economist, said the I.R.C.'s

work involves assistance to political refugees round the world. The I.R.C. project funded

the Norman Foundation was

a medical-service unit set up in the Belgian Congo to aid

Angolan refugees and others.

Mr. Weil said today that he "misrecalled" himself yester-

day in recollecting that "a mysterious gentleman" from the

C.I.A. had approached him in 1963 or 1964 with a specific

request to pass agency money to the Congo medical project.

He said he had also erred in recalling that the foundation

had agreed to serve as a pass-through for the funds only after

deciding that the I.R.C. project would have been worthy of

a contribution from its own endowment.

'I Was Wrong'

"Let me make it very clear," he said in the interview, "I

made a mistake. I was wrong."

Although he spoke to Mr. Cherne last night and again

this morning, he said, Mr. Cherne "did not ask me to

do anything" with respect to setting the record straight. He

is amending his earlier statements because "harm has been

done," he emphasized.

Mr. cherne was appointed in 1973 to sit on the President's

Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which The New York

Times reported erroneously today was abolished by Mr. Ford

this week. It was the United States Intelligence Board that

was abolished by executive order on Wednesday.

The President's Intelligence

Board, created by President

Eisenhower in 1956, is a group

of private citizens responsible

for reviewing the functions of

the Federal intelligence community and reporting to the

President on the conduct of those agencies.

The United States Intelligence

Board was a high-level coordinating group within the intel-

ligence community, presided over by the director of Central

Intelligence. In the past it met as often as each week to co-

ordinate intelligence data avail-

able from all members of the community.

In a related development

Freedom House, an organiza-

tion with which Mr. Cherne has also been closely associated

for many years, asked George Bush, director of Central Intel-

ligence, whether the C.I.A. had ever given it funds "directly

or through any other entity."

The request was in a letter sent to Mr. Bush that men-

tioned a report, also in today's Times, that Freedom House re-

ceived \$3,500 from the J. M. Kaplan Fund between 1962 and

1964.

The Times article quoted executives of the Kaplan Fund

as having said that while they had passed C.I.A. money to

the now-defunct Institute for International Labor Research,

all the funds paid by them to Freedom House or to the

I.R.C. had been their own.